

TENnderCARE NEWS

Spring 2008

A NEWSLETTER FOR PRETEENS, TEENS, AND YOUNG ADULTS WHO ARE TENNCARE MEMBERS.

www.uherivervalley.com

Beware of Staph Infections

As a teen, you know that pimples and zits can be common. But beware of skin infections that may appear as pustules or boils. They are often red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. They may be caused by a type of bacteria called Staphylococcus (staf-uh-low-kah-kus), or staph for a shorter name.

Several types of staph bacteria exist. Staph bacteria live in the nose and on skin surfaces of healthy people. But when the skin is broken, staph bacteria can enter the wound and cause an infection. Most of these skin infections are minor and can be treated without antibiotics.

However, a staph infection that is showing up in schools can become serious because it is resistant to many antibiotics. If the infection enters the blood stream, it can cause serious health problems, even death in some cases.

Schools have many elements that make spreading of the infection possible. In some cases, schools have even closed to be cleaned and disinfected because of the widespread infection. **Factors of spreading include:**

- Crowding — skin-to-skin contact with someone who has a Staph infection
- Frequent contact, such as in sports
- Open wounds
- Sharing of infected items

Protect Yourself

- Keep clean. Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Shower or bathe daily.
- Cover cuts and scrapes with a clean dry bandage until healed.
- Do not share personal items. Avoid sharing towels, razors or clothing that has come into contact with your bare skin. Use clothing or a towel between your skin and shared equipment such as weight-training benches. Disinfect sports equipment after each use.
- Keep surfaces clean that often come in contact with your skin.



Energy Drinks Good or Bad?

You may not need to spend money on energy drinks to get the energy you need.

In fact, some so-called energy drinks may do more harm than good. That's because caffeine is one of the main ingredients in many energy drinks.

Caffeine is a stimulant. It can increase reaction time and alertness. But, it can also increase blood pressure and heart rate. This could be bad for people with risk factors for heart disease. Caffeine can cause nervousness, upset stomach, headaches and sleep

problems. These side effects can seem even worse if you are taking certain medicines.

Besides caffeine and sugar, some brands of energy drinks may have ingredients that have not been tested for safety.

Your best bet for getting energy is the natural way:

- Eat a well-balanced diet
- Drink plenty of water
- Exercise regularly
- Get plenty of sleep

Straight Talk Just for Girls

"My periods are not regular. What's wrong with me?" If this is your situation, there are some things you need to know.

Many girls have very irregular periods during the first couple years of menstruating. In fact, irregular is regular for many girls. Menstruating or a period happens when all parts of a girl's reproductive system have matured and are working together.

The levels of your hormones determine the amount of blood and how long your period lasts. Since you are still growing in your teen years, your hormone levels are constantly changing. This can account for your period being different from one to the next.

In addition, young women don't always ovulate every month when they first get their periods. There's no sure way for a girl to know which month she is

ovulating and which she is not. You should assume you can get pregnant each and every month, even if your periods are irregular.

A girl's first period can happen anytime from about age 10 to age 16. Just as the onset of your period can vary, so can the length and the number of days between cycles. A cycle is the number of days from the start of one period to the start of the next. Menstrual cycles can be anywhere between 21 and 45 days for the first couple of years. The cycle usually shortens to 21 to 34 days. The amount of time that you may have your period can vary from two or three days to seven days or longer.

Other things can also cause irregular periods or make your periods stop. They include:

- Too much exercise
- Eating disorders

- Poor nutrition
- Heavy stress

If you are sexually active and skip a period, you should still see a doctor to see if you are pregnant. If you have questions, you can always call Nurseline and talk to a registered nurse. The number is 1-800-237-4936, and the call is free.

Remember, if you are an AmeriChoice member under age 21, visits to your primary care provider (PCP) are free under the TENnderCare Program.

Sources: National Institute of Child Health & Human Development and the Food and Drug Administration





Saturday
March 15, 2008
1p.m. - 5p.m.
New Monumental
Baptist Church
Chattanooga, TN

Upcoming TENnderCare events

The TENnderCare Youth Health Conference is going to be held in order to reach and inform adolescents, ages 13-20, about the importance of preventive health and the value of staying healthy. The event hopes to help break down barriers and fears related to physicals, and to encourage teens and young adults to take charge of their health. Students who want to attend must commit to participating and helping with the event. They must follow through with all responsibilities leading up to the event, and they will be signing a pledge form to honor their commitment.

In order to participate in the event, you must call the TENnderCare provider number 423-209-8334 or 423-209-8336 to register for the conference.



Straight Talk Just for Guys

Let's face it. Everyone wants to be a winner. And what guy wouldn't want to look "ripped" or have the body that girls admire? But if you're not careful, you could sacrifice your good health for temporary glory.

Consider this. You probably think that sports supplements are safe to use and good for you because they're sold at gyms and health food stores. You might be right. But you might be wrong.

The dangers of sports supplements stem from the fact that little is known about them and their side effects on the body. Because the sports

supplement industry is largely unregulated, there's no way to know what or how pure the ingredients are. Side effects of sports supplements include:

- Allergic reactions
- Stomach cramps
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Weight gain
- Water retention

What about performance-enhancing drugs or PEDs? Some of the most common PEDs are steroids and growth hormones. If you use PEDs to get an edge, you're not only cheating; you're playing a losing game. In addition to severe acne, PEDs can cause serious health problems — even death. You won't care how fast or strong you are if you have to deal with some of these problems:

- Baldness
- Muscle cramps and muscle strain

- Sleep problems
- Heat stroke
- Severe mood swings and depression
- Seizures
- Irregular heart beat
- Heart attack
- Stroke and blood clots
- Abnormal kidney function
- Liver damage
- Cancers

The only way to be sure any supplements are safe is to check with a doctor, nutritionist, or other medical professional. If you have questions, you can always call NurseLine, and talk to a registered nurse. The number is 1-800-237-4936, and the call is free.

Remember, if you are an AmeriChoice member under age 21, visits to your primary care provider (PCP) are free under the TENnderCare Program.



Sweets Are No Treat for Teeth

Do sweet treats affect your teeth? YES, food or drinks with a lot of sugar may give you cavities.

The bacteria (germs) in your mouth love sugars found in many foods and drinks. The bacteria feed on the sugars producing acids that hurt the enamel or hard surface of your teeth.

If you eat or drink a lot of sugar, and don't brush your teeth afterwards, more damage and cavities can occur.

It is important to choose food and drinks wisely, and think before you eat. **Here are some tips that will help:**

- Eat a healthy diet of fruit, vegetables, meat, bread and milk.
- Choose healthy snacks that are low in sugar such as apples, carrot sticks, yogurt or low fat cheese.
- Drink lots of water.
- Don't drink soft drinks. They contain a lot of sugar. A can of regular soda has 10 teaspoons of sugar.

- Brush your teeth thoroughly after food or drink that contains sugar. Remember the longer the sugar sits on your teeth, the more damage it can cause!
- Brush thoroughly two times each day with fluoride toothpaste and floss one time each day.
- Visit your dentist regularly for checkups and cleanings.

Dentists have known for a long time that having a healthy mouth helps you have a healthy body. To stay healthy, you should see your dentist every six months, and brush and floss your teeth daily.

If you have TennCare you have TENNderCARE (EPSDT) dental services until you become 21 years old. These services include FREE regular 6-month checkups, fluoride treatments and sealants.

If you have TennCare, call Doral Customer Service at 1-888-233-5935, or visit the Web site at www.doralusa.com

- For help finding a dentist.
- For questions about your TennCare dental benefits.
- For help with interpretation and translation.

No one is treated in a different way because of race, color, birthplace, national origin, sex, age, disability, or religion. Do you think you've been treated unfairly? Do you have more questions? Do you need more help? You can make a free call to the Family Assistance Service Center at 1-866-311-4287. In Nashville, call 743-2000.

Nadie recibe un trato diferente debido a su raza, color de la piel, lugar de nacimiento, idioma, sexo, edad, discapacidad, o religión. ¿Cree que lo han tratado injustamente? ¿Tiene más preguntas? ¿Necesita más ayuda? Usted puede llamar gratis al Centro de Servicio para Asistencia Familiar al 1-866 311-4290. En Nashville, llame al 743-2001.

Interpretation and translation services are free to TennCare members. Please call Customer Service at 800-690-1606 for more information.

Si usted habla español, tenemos representantes que le pueden ayudar. Por favor llame por teléfono al número que se encuentra en la parte de atrás de su carta de identidad, y pregunte por un representante que hable español. Los servicios de interpretación y traducción son gratuitos para todos. Gracias.



Need A Ride?

If you need a ride to your doctor or health department, call: **1-800-690-1606**

AmeriChoice
by UnitedHealthcare

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TENNder CARE

✓ Check In ✓ Check Up ✓ Check Back

TENNESSEE'S EPSDT PROGRAM